

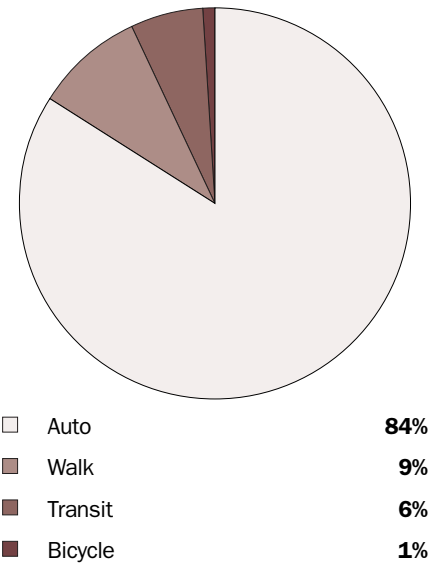
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The Transportation System in Brief

Whether by car, bus, ferry or on foot, people in the Bay Area really get around. In 2001, the region's residents made more than 21 million trips on an average weekday, about 17 percent more than in 1990. Most of these trips are made by car (84 percent), with walking being the next most common mode (9 percent), followed by public transit and bicycling (see pie chart at right).

Projections indicate that population will continue to increase in the Bay Area, driven by job growth. More people means more travel and increased pressures on regional and local transportation systems. Maintaining mobility requires wise investment of always-limited resources.

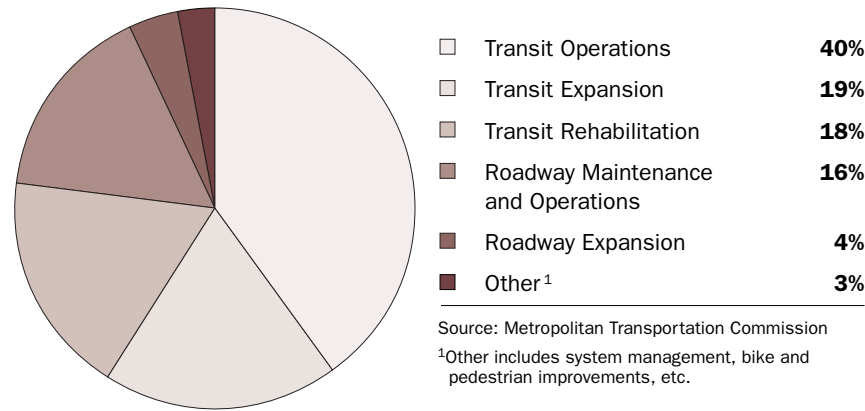
Travel Mode for All Daily Trips



Source: Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Percentages are estimates for 2001, based on data developed in 1998.

The latest effort to prioritize transportation funding was completed in late 2001 when MTC adopted the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan*. This 25-year, \$87 billion plan devotes about 74 percent of expected revenues to basic maintenance needs and ongoing operations. Recognizing the region's heavy commitment to transit and reflecting the fact that many of the region's highways are already fully developed, the RTP allocates 19 percent of the funds to transit expansion and 4 percent to roadway expansion.

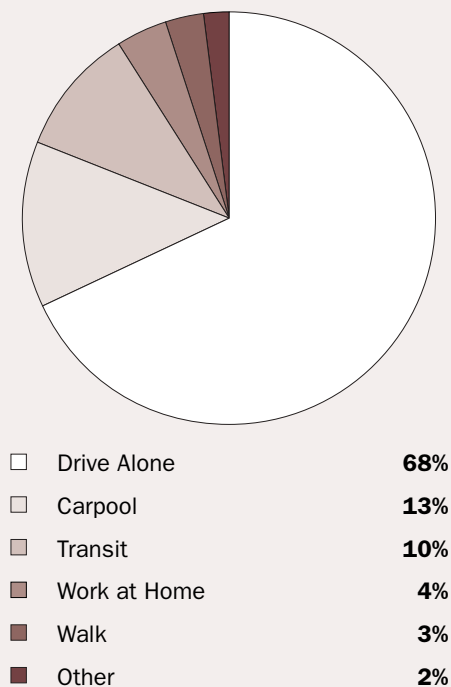
Bay Area Transportation Spending, 2002–2026 (Total: \$87.4 billion)



Source: Metropolitan Transportation Commission
¹Other includes system management, bike and pedestrian improvements, etc.

Closer Look at Commuting – Commuting to work accounts for roughly a quarter of all Bay Area trips. According to data from the 2000 Census, the average commute in 2000 was 29.4 minutes, an increase of nearly 15 percent from 1990. As with all trips, most commute trips are by private vehicle; 68 percent of work trips are by people driving alone and 13 percent by people in carpools and vanpools. The rate of transit use for commute trips (10 percent) is higher than for all trips (6 percent). One of the main reasons for this is that transit service is at its most frequent during peak periods, when traffic congestion is at its worst. Under these conditions, the attractiveness of transit as a travel option is greatly enhanced.

How Bay Area Workers Commute



Source: Census 2000

The Freeway System

The Bay Area's 620-mile freeway system is the workhorse of the transportation network. In 2001, vehicles traveled 28 billion miles on Bay Area freeways — about 60 percent of all miles driven by trucks and passenger vehicles, and an increase of 9 percent since 1997. The roving tow trucks of the Freeway Service Patrol cruise along some 450 miles of the most congested freeways and expressways, helping motorists with car trouble, removing debris or quickly clearing accidents. Approximately 27 percent of freeway ramps are metered to help keep traffic flowing smoothly.

The freeway system includes 275 miles of carpool lanes, or “diamond lanes” that allow people in carpools, vanpools and buses to bypass congestion during peak commute hours. In 2001, carpool lanes carried an average of 16 percent of vehicles and 30 percent of people in the peak commute hour on freeway segments with carpool lanes.

The Local Roadway Network

The Bay Area has 19,000 centerline miles of local roadways, which are owned and maintained by cities and counties. Local roadways carry about 40 percent of all miles driven. They are critical for getting around by bicycle and bus as well as by automobile. About half of the traffic signals on the region's local roadway system are timed to improve travel speeds and reduce delays at major intersections. Some streets feature signals that give preferential treatment to buses that are running late so they can get back on schedule.

The Public Transit System

Public transit is critical to making the region's transportation system work. The region relies on public transit to reduce the number of cars on the road during the commute and to provide mobility to people without access to cars, including school children. Bay Area transit operators are nationally recognized as leaders in making the transit system accessible to persons with disabilities; in fiscal year 2000-01, 91 percent of the region's buses and 72 percent of its rail stations were accessible to people using wheelchairs.

In fiscal year 2000-01, Bay Area residents and workers made roughly 533 million transit trips, and transit operators provided a total of 188 million miles of service. This represents an increase of 13 percent in ridership and 22 percent in miles of service since fiscal year 1996-97. About a quarter of all scheduled transit routes ran at least every 15 minutes during peak commute hours.

More than 60 percent of all transit trips are on buses. The rest are on BART, commuter rail, light rail, ferries, and door-to-door vans and taxis that serve elderly and disabled riders (called paratransit service).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The ability to get around safely on foot or by bicycle is increasingly recognized as an essential factor in a neighborhood's quality of life. The network used by bicyclists and pedestrians is ubiquitous. It includes the entire local roadway system, as well as sidewalks and some dedicated pathways. In addition, most buses and trains now accommodate bicycles. Bicycles and pedestrians are excluded from freeways for safety purposes, but access is provided on Bay Area bridges, either through bicycle lanes or some form of transit connection such as the bicycle shuttle across the Bay Bridge. Still, there are numerous locations without sidewalks or bicycle lanes; in such cases, bicyclists and pedestrians must share a lane with traffic.

The *2001 Regional Transportation Plan* proposed a 1,900-mile network of regionally significant bicycle facilities; the plan also identified gaps in city- and county-level bicycle plans and recommended specific improvements to fill these gaps. Approximately 35 percent of the regional network exists today.

Regionwide, bicycling accounts for 1 percent of all trips, and walking accounts for about 9 percent. However, for trips to school, bicycling accounts for about 4 percent of trips and walking for more than 20 percent.

Airports and Seaports

The region's airports and seaports are gateways to the rest of the country and the world for tourism, business travel and trade. The three major international airports (San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose) and five major seaports (Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond, Redwood City and Benicia) generate considerable ground traffic — passengers and cargo arriving and departing by car, truck and rail. In 2001, over 58 million people passed through the region's airports, a drop of 1 percent since 1997. The volume of ocean-going containers and bulk freight passing through Bay Area seaports each rose by 8 percent in the 1997–2001 time period.